



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



## AU – EU AGRICULTURE MINISTERIAL MEETING

### CONCEPT NOTE thematic session on

"Sanitary and Phytosanitary standards and food safety as key for intra African trade"

FAO Headquarters, Rome, 21 June 2019 (09h30-12h00)

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**Format:** One of four parallel High Level thematic sessions. The session, chaired at ministerial level, will commence with two keynote speakers addressing the issue of Sanitary and Phytosanitary standards (SPS) and food safety from the AU and EU perspective. This is followed by a panel discussion, in which a range of active stakeholders will express themselves on a number of SPS and food safety issues related to intra African trade of agri-food products. Audience participation is expected. The Chair will report the main conclusions of the session to the Plenary session in the afternoon.

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### Concept

Following the twin Food Safety Conferences (FAO/WHO/WTO/AU) earlier this year in Addis Ababa in February and in Geneva in April, this Conference comes timely to **emphasise the need to further invest in sanitary and phytosanitary standards and food safety in Africa**, not only for enabling trade, but first and foremost for domestic public health and market development.

The agricultural potential in Africa is huge and increased agricultural production can reach many more African markets than it does today. With several initiatives already existing, undertaken by African governments, Regional Economic Communities, many development partners such as the European Union and its Member States and the private sector including farmers and cooperatives, ways to best advance value chain promotion in practical terms should be explored. The Malabo Declaration has established intra-African trade integration as a key priority of African Countries. Likewise, the Joint Declaration of the AU-EU Abidjan Summit [November 2017] has expressed strong support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as a commitment “to seize market opportunities for African food production and sustainable social and ecological livelihoods, notably through development of sustainable and fair value chains, and through the applicable EU Trade arrangements.”

However, to work towards the long-term vision of intra-African free trade, intermediate steps are necessary. In line with the recommendations of the Task Force Rural Africa<sup>1</sup>, tools and methods to

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/report-tfra\\_mar2019\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/report-tfra_mar2019_en.pdf)

assess value chains in economic, environmental and social terms need to be used, promoted and disseminated. Support to regional integration and harmonisation of food safety and sanitary regulation should be scaled up. To enhance food safety and quality, the national regulatory environment of the food system and related food safety quality infrastructure need to be strengthened in line with domestic value chain development.

The EU is the sole entity in the world that has gone through a similar process when creating its single market. Therefore it makes sense to join forces and facilitate exchange through twinning programmes at all levels: public and private sector and farmer organisations.

Although the EU is at the forefront of promoting agricultural development in Africa, and many partner countries have chosen agriculture and food security to be among the first priorities of their development programmes, strengthening SPS is not so prominent on this priority list. Notwithstanding the multiple SPS capacity building programs and the various SPS capacity evaluation studies carried out by FAO, the World Animal Health Organisation and the International Plant Protection Convention, huge needs remain to overcome trading partners' import requirements. Institutional weaknesses and compliance costs are amongst the root causes. Moreover, recent studies indicate that the domestic spill-over effects of SPS capacity building on local safe food supplies are minimal. The need to create rural employment for youth and women together with the essential move towards a sustainable agriculture and ditto food system add to these challenges.

With all of the above in mind, this session will kick-off with high-level AU and EU keynote speakers who will share the essentials on SPS and food safety from their perspective. A thorough panel discussion will follow and bring together a range of different stakeholders, around the theme of overcoming the SPS hurdles in intra-African trade of agri-food products. The audience is invited to challenge their views. The discussion will contribute to helping set the SPS and food safety investment priorities to strengthen food safety governance across the continent. This will support the operationalisation of the SPS Annex of the AfCFTA.

A detailed program is attached.

<b>Thematic session 4</b> <b>Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) and food safety as key for intra African trade</b>	
09h30-09h50	<p><b>Opening Remarks by the Chair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Michael Creed, Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland</li> </ul>
09h50-10h30	<p><b>Keynote speeches:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vytenis Andriukaitis, EU Commissioner DG Health and Food Safety <i>'European Union SPS policy and food safety in the EU single market'</i></li> <li>• H.E. Prof. Dr. Ezz El-Din Abu Steit, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Arab Republic of Egypt <i>'Proposed Action Plan for Promoting and Strengthening SPS Standards in Africa'</i></li> </ul> <p>Discussant: Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa Director, AUC-DREA</p>
10h30-11h00	<b>Coffee break</b>
11h00-12h00	<p><b>High-level panel on "How to overcome SPS hurdles in intra African trade?"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator, Matthew Hudson, European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety</li> <li>• Lucy Muchoki, Pan African Agribusiness and Agroindustry Consortium, PAnAAC</li> <li>• Marlynne Hopper, Standards and Trade Development Facility, WTO-STDF</li> <li>• Godfrey Bahigwa, African Union Commission, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC-DREA</li> <li>• Bernhard Url, European Food Safety Authority, EFSA</li> <li>• Jeremy Knops, Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee, COLEACP</li> </ul> <p>Discussants: African Smallholder Farmers Organisations</p>